

Proclamation 6403 of February 14, 1992**American Heart Month, 1992**

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Since our first annual observance of American Heart Month just over 25 years ago, our Nation has made substantial progress in the fight against cardiovascular disease. According to the American Heart Association, a not-for-profit volunteer health agency, age-adjusted death rates from heart attack declined by almost 51 percent between 1963 and 1988. During the same period, the death rate from stroke dropped even further, by close to 61 percent. Advances in both the prevention and the treatment of cardiovascular disease have saved lives.

Despite the success of related research and nationwide public awareness campaigns, diseases of the heart and blood vessels continue to claim the lives of nearly 1 million Americans each year. In fact, heart attack, stroke, and other forms of cardiovascular disease remain our Nation's number one killer.

The American Heart Association reports that more than 69 million Americans currently suffer from one or more forms of cardiovascular disease, including high blood pressure, coronary heart disease, rheumatic heart disease, and stroke. While many people mistakenly assume that heart disease occurs primarily in old age, studies show that 5 percent of all heart attacks occur in people younger than age 40, and more than 45 percent occur in people younger than age 65.

Cardiovascular disease can affect people of any age, race, or walk of life, and women as well as men. Its toll in terms of individual pain and suffering is incalculable. Its cost to our Nation, in terms of health care expenses and lost productivity, totals in the billions of dollars.

Today concerned organizations in both the public and private sectors are working to save lives and to help alleviate the wider impact of cardiovascular disease. Through the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, the Federal Government has spent millions of dollars on educational programs and on research into cardiovascular disease. The American Heart Association estimates that it has invested nearly 1 billion dollars in research since it became a national voluntary health organization in the late 1940s. That investment has been made possible by the generosity of the American public and by the dedicated efforts of the Association's 3.5 million volunteers.

Thanks, in large part, to ongoing support from the Federal Government and from the American Heart Association, physicians and scientists have been able to make many important advances in cardiovascular health care. Public and private funding has also led to the development of effective educational programs, which have enabled more and more Americans to learn what they can do to avoid heart attack and stroke.

Today, for example, we know how important it is to avoid the use of tobacco products, in particular, smoking. We are especially aware of the dangers of smoking among young people. We also know that controlling one's blood pressure, maintaining a diet low in fat and cholesterol, and exercising regularly are all prudent ways of reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Encouraged by the progress that we have made thus far, and recognizing the need for continued education and research, let us pause this month to strengthen and renew our commitment to the fight against cardiovascular disease. After all, the many programs and activities that are conducted during American Heart Month offer lessons for life.

The Congress, by Joint Resolution approved December 30, 1963 (77 Stat. 843; 36 U.S.C. 169b), has requested that the President issue an annual proclamation designating February as "American Heart Month."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the month of February 1992 as American Heart Month. I urge all Americans to join in observing this month with appropriate programs and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 14 day of February, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and sixteenth.

GEORGE BUSH

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National Visiting Nurse Associations Week, 1992

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

When Florence Nightingale and William Rathbone's concept of the visiting nurse was brought to the United States in 1885, that event marked the beginning of a long and distinguished tradition of service to homebound Americans. Today the Department of Health and Human Services reports that more than 1,500,000 men, women, and children receive home health care and support services through visiting nurse associations. Such assistance is invaluable to persons who are terminally ill, to persons who are recovering from a temporary illness or injury, and to persons who are incapacitated by a chronic disease or disability—individuals who might otherwise be forced to seek care in an institutional setting. Visiting nurse associations enable these Americans to obtain needed services in the comfort and security of their own homes.

While it is inspired by the same spirit of compassion and volunteerism, the role of the visiting nurse has changed dramatically over the past 100 years. In addition to providing medical care, visiting nurse associations also offer social services, nutritional counseling and Meals-on-Wheels programs, as well as physical, speech, and occupational therapy. Today's visiting nurse associations also operate wellness clinics, hospices, and adult day care centers. Their efforts are a reminder that health care is made more accessible and more affordable by the hundreds of thousands of Americans who volunteer their time and service to others.

The Visiting Nurse Associations of America are independently operated community organizations that serve more than 500 urban and rural communities in 45 States. These organizations are committed to